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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2016  
TAGS: PREL PGOV UNSC ETTC ER SU  
SUBJECT: EU REPRESENTATIVE FOR SUDAN BRIEFS ON DARFUR  
DEVELOPMENTS

Classified By: AMB Scott H. DeLisi, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On September 29, EU Special Representative for Sudan, Pekka Haavisto briefed the diplomatic community on recent developments in Darfur. Haavisto highlighted the shifting alliances in Darfur and raised concerns over the role of Eritrea in Darfur politics and the creation of the National Redemption Front (NRF). In that regard, Post would welcome Washington guidance should Eritrea succeed in uniting the Darfur opposition under the NRF umbrella and then seek a leading role in renegotiating or amending the DPA. Haavisto also spoke briefly about the initialing of the Security Arrangement Protocol for eastern Sudan and concern over power sharing in the overall agreement. End Summary.

SHIFTING ALLIANCES...

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¶2. (C) EU Special Representative for Sudan, Pekka Haavisto returned to Asmara on September 27 to both meet with SLM and NRF Darfurians present in Asmara and to discuss with the Eastern Front leadership the general state of negotiations on eastern Sudan. While interested in both regions, his focus during his briefing to the diplomatic community on September 29 - just before departing for Khartoum - was focused on shifting alliances in Darfur and Eritrean support for them.

¶3. (C) Haavisto began the briefing by explaining that SLM/A AbdulWahid Mohamed Ahmed Nur had finally broken down and aligned himself with the National Redemption Front (NRF) and had made amends with the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), particularly Khalil Ibrahim himself. He said that the two had issued a communiqu stateing that the SLM/A and JEM will cooperate. Haavisto acknowledged the irony in this move given AbdulWahid,s tirades against Ibrahim in the past, but attributed it to AbdulWahid,s desire to make himself relevant again in the Darfur process. He also admitted that he did not know what Ahmed Abdel Shafi,s opinion of these

new alliances was, but felt he must be in a difficult place, being the only non-signatory who has not joined the NRF. The French Ambassador, who met Abdel Shafi on October 1, said that Shafi had as his first priority the mending of the SLM splits. Haavisto observed that while this new alliance might allow AbdulWahid to avoid dealing with Shafi directly about the SLM split, it did not really move the parties closer to resolving overall divisions within the Darfur opposition. Nor did it bring them closer to agreement on accepting the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), he said.

#### NEW DEVELOPMENTS CAUSE CONCERN FOR GNU

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¶3. (C) Within the GNU, the possibility of continued conflict in Darfur has given both the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People,s Liberation Movement (SPLM) cause for concern. The SPLM, he said, fears that continued fissures in the Darfur opposition and renewed fighting could put the SPLM in a very difficult situation. He reported that both the NCP and SPLM want to see another mediation of sorts in Darfur, however they differ on how it should be dealt with and who should take the lead. The NCP is looking to Egypt and other Arab nations in the region to take the lead, whereas the SPLM would like to host an internal mediation with Eritrea,s involvement.

¶4. (C) Haavisto fears that the worst case scenario for Darfur, also seems the most likely outcome: that both sides reject the possibility of negotiations and look for a military solution. He worries that the opposition movements, in particular the NRF, may continue fighting and gain further victories in Darfur thus making a negotiated settlement more elusive. He also feared that intensified conflict could

spark a public uprising that would target the government in the many camps in Darfur, especially around El Fasher. Haavisto stressed that the international community must work to avoid this worse case scenario at all costs, because he believes if the NRF succeeds in Darfur they will likely continue on to Kurdufan.

#### WHAT EXACTLY IS ERITREA,S ROLE?

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¶5. (C) Eritrea,s role in the Darfur process remains murky. Eritrea maintains that they are trying to get all the non-signatories under one umbrella to reach an enduring agreement to end the problems in Darfur. Their interest, they maintain, is in regional stability and in recognizing the just concerns of all elements of Darfur society. Haavisto reported that the various non-signatories are all en route to Asmara at the GSE,s request. He noted that the GSE had similarly brought the Darfurian non-signatories together following the signing of the DPA in Abuja, leading among other things to the creation of the NRF.

¶6. (C) Haavisto believes, as do we, that the Eritreans are intent on playing a continuing role in Sudan. The GSE, he said, seeks to play a key role in any future Darfur negotiations ) negotiations which the GSE believes are essential for resolution of the problems in Darfur. And, said Haavisto, the GSE by virtue of its links to the NRF and other non-signatories, as well as its ties to the SPLM, may emerge as a broker. This is not, however, necessarily a good development for the AU, UN or the international community overall. Eritrea continues to argue that neither the UN nor the AU need to be involved in Darfur and states that it is not the right time to blue hat the AU troops in Darfur. Moreover, the Eritreans now seem to have influenced AbdulWahid, the NRF and JEM into articulating this same line:  
- now for the UN in Darfur.8

#### ... AND THE EAST?

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¶6. (C) Haavisto had met with the Eastern Front leadership while in Asmara, but had very little to offer on where he saw

the agreement heading. He confirmed that the security agreement had been finalized, but that the parties continued to work on the last two sticking points, the development fund and the issue of making one region of eastern Sudan (see septel). He believed that an agreement would be finalized in the coming week. He concluded that the NCP seemed focused on sidelining Eritrea following the conclusion of the agreement, but that Eritrea was similarly focused on ways to be essential in Sudan after negotiations on eastern Sudan concluded.

CONCLUSION

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¶7. (C) Post has been unable to confirm the communique on AbdulWahid joining the NRF, but will work with contacts to obtain a copy. If AbdulWahid has indeed joined the NRF, it will leave Shafi as the only holdout and put considerable pressure on him to also join ) especially from the Eritreans who seem determined to create a united Darfur opposition under the NRF umbrella. Dirage returned to Asmara on September 27 and Khamis Abdalla Ababr and Khalil Ibrahim are expected back in Asmara in the coming days. We anticipate that Eritrea will make itself a player, one way or the other, and would welcome guidance from Washington on possible GSE efforts to encourage negotiations to alter/amend the DPA.

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